

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 28, 2006

AMENDED IN SENATE MAY 10, 2006

SENATE BILL

No. 1237

Introduced by Senator Maldonado

February 6, 2006

An act to amend, *repeal, and add* Section 35401 of the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1237, as amended, Maldonado. Vehicles: combination length.

Existing law prohibits any combination of vehicles coupled together, including any attachments, from exceeding a total length of 65 feet, with certain, specified exceptions. Existing law, which becomes inoperative on January 1, 2007, exempts a combination of vehicles from the specified length limitation, and authorizes the combination to have a total length of not more than 75 feet, if the combination (1) consisted of a motortruck and 2 trailers; (2) a trailer in the combination does not exceed 28 feet 6 inches in length; (3) the combination was used exclusively to transport agricultural products from the field to the first point of handling and return, and each direction of transport did not exceed 80 miles; and (4) the combination was not operated on a highway that is designated as a national network route.

This bill *additionally would—delete require the combination of vehicles, in order for the exemptions described above to apply, to not exceed 50 miles per hour when operating on the highway, to successfully complete a commercial vehicle safety alliance inspection conducted by the Department of the California Highway Patrol, and to operate on the highways only after the development of safe routing*

techniques, as specified. The bill would also delete obsolete language. The bill would repeal this exemption on January 1, 2009.

The bill would require the Department of the California Highway Patrol, in consultation with the Department of Transportation, to conduct a study as to the exemption and to report the results of the study to the Legislature and Governor on or before April 1, 2008.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: ~~no~~-yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 35401 of the Vehicle Code is amended
2 to read:

3 35401. (a) Except as provided in subdivisions (b), (c), and
4 (d), a combination of vehicles coupled together, including
5 attachments, may not exceed a total length of 65 feet.

6 (b) (1) A combination of vehicles coupled together, including
7 attachments, that consists of a truck tractor, a semitrailer, and a
8 semitrailer or trailer, may not exceed a total length of 75 feet, if
9 the length of neither the semitrailers nor the trailer in the
10 combination of vehicles exceeds 28 feet 6 inches.

11 (2) A B-train assembly is excluded from the measurement of
12 semitrailer length when used between the first and second
13 semitrailers of a truck tractor-semitrailer-semitrailer combination
14 of vehicles. However, if there is no second semitrailer mounted
15 to the B-train assembly, it shall be included in the length
16 measurement of the semitrailer to which it is attached.

17 (3) (A) *A combination of vehicles coupled together, including*
18 *attachments, may have a total length of not more than 75 feet, if*
19 *all of the following apply:*

20 (i) *The combination of vehicles consists of a motortruck and*
21 *two trailers.*

22 (ii) *A trailer in the combination does not exceed 28 feet 6*
23 *inches in length.*

24 (iii) *The combination is used exclusively to transport*
25 *agricultural products from the field to the first point of handling*
26 *and return, and each direction of transport does not exceed 80*
27 *miles.*

1 (iv) *The combination is not operated on a highway designated*
2 *by the United States Department of Transportation as a national*
3 *network route.*

4 (v) *The combination of vehicles may not exceed 50 miles per*
5 *hour when operating on the highway.*

6 (vi) *The combination of vehicles shall successfully complete a*
7 *commercial vehicle safety alliance inspection on a quarterly*
8 *basis conducted by the Department of the California Highway*
9 *Patrol.*

10 (vii) *The combination of vehicles shall operate on the highway*
11 *only after, agricultural entities develop safe routing techniques,*
12 *in consultation with the Department of the California Highway*
13 *Patrol, from the field to the first point of handling and return.*

14 (B) *This paragraph applies only in a city and county that by*
15 *resolution or ordinance adopts its provisions.*

16 (C) *The Department of the California Highway Patrol, in*
17 *consultation with the Department of Transportation, shall*
18 *conduct a study of the effect that the exemption provided in this*
19 *paragraph has on public safety particularly the enhanced safety*
20 *requirements imposed by clauses (v), (vi), and (vii) of*
21 *subparagraph (A). The Department of the California Highway*
22 *Patrol shall report the results of the study to the Legislature and*
23 *the Governor on or before April 1, 2008.*

24 (c) (1) A tow truck in combination with a single disabled
25 vehicle or a single abandoned vehicle that is authorized to travel
26 on the highways by this chapter is exempt from subdivision (a)
27 when operating under a valid annual transportation permit.

28 (2) A tow truck, in combination with a disabled or abandoned
29 combination of vehicles that are authorized to travel on the
30 highways by this chapter, is exempt from subdivision (a) when
31 operating under a valid annual transportation permit and within a
32 100-mile radius of the location specified in the permit.

33 (3) A tow truck may exceed the 100-mile radius restriction
34 imposed under paragraph (2) if a single trip permit is obtained
35 from the Department of Transportation.

36 (d) A city or county may, by ordinance, prohibit a combination
37 of vehicles of a total length in excess of 60 feet upon highways
38 under its respective jurisdiction. The ordinance may not be
39 effective until appropriate signs are erected indicating either the
40 streets affected by the ordinance or the streets not affected, as the

1 local authority determines will best serve to give notice of the
2 ordinance.

3 (e) A city or county, upon a determination that a highway or
4 portion of highway under its jurisdiction cannot, in consideration
5 of public safety, sustain the operation of trailers or semitrailers of
6 the maximum kingpin to rearmost axle distances permitted under
7 Section 35400, may, by ordinance, establish lesser distances
8 consistent with the maximum distances that the highway or
9 highway portion can sustain, except that a city or county may not
10 restrict the kingpin to rearmost axle measurement to less than 38
11 feet on those highways or highway portions. A city or county
12 considering the adoption of an ordinance shall consider, but not
13 be limited to, consideration of, all of the following:

14 (1) A comparison of the operating characteristics of the
15 vehicles to be limited as compared to operating characteristics of
16 other vehicles regulated by this code.

17 (2) Actual traffic volume.

18 (3) Frequency of accidents.

19 (4) Any other relevant data.

20 In addition, the city or county may appoint an advisory
21 committee consisting of local representatives of those interests
22 that are likely to be affected and shall consider the
23 recommendations of the advisory committee in adopting the
24 ordinance. The ordinance may not be effective until appropriate
25 signs are erected indicating the highways or highway portions
26 affected by the ordinance.

27 This subdivision shall only become operative upon the
28 adoption of an enabling ordinance by a city or county.

29 (f) Whenever, in the judgment of the Department of
30 Transportation, a state highway cannot, in consideration of public
31 safety, sustain the operation of trailers or semitrailers of the
32 maximum kingpin to rearmost axle distances permitted under
33 Section 35400, the director, in consultation with the Department
34 of the California Highway Patrol, shall compile data on total
35 traffic volume, frequency of use by vehicles covered by this
36 subdivision, accidents involving these vehicles, and other
37 relevant data to assess whether these vehicles are a threat to
38 public safety and should be excluded from the highway or
39 highway segment. The study, containing the conclusions and
40 recommendations of the director, shall be submitted to the

Secretary of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency. Unless otherwise notified by the secretary, the director shall hold public hearings in accordance with the procedures set forth in Article 3 (commencing with Section 35650) of Chapter 5 for the purpose of determining the maximum kingpin to rear axle length, which shall be not less than 38 feet, that the highway or highway segment can sustain without unreasonable threat to the safety of the public. Upon the basis of the findings, the Director of Transportation shall declare in writing the maximum kingpin to rear axle lengths which can be maintained with safety upon the highway. Following the declaration of maximum lengths as provided by this subdivision, the Department of Transportation shall erect suitable signs at each end of the affected portion of the highway and at any other points that the Department of Transportation determines to be necessary to give adequate notice of the length limits.

The Department of Transportation, in consultation with the Department of the California Highway Patrol, shall compile traffic volume, geometric, and other relevant data, to assess the maximum kingpin to rearmost axle distance of vehicle combinations appropriate for those state highways or portion of highways, affected by this section, that cannot safely accommodate trailers or semitrailers of the maximum kingpin to rearmost axle distances permitted under Section 35400.

(g) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2009, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that is enacted before January 1, 2009, deletes or extends that date.

SEC. 2. Section 35401 is added to the Vehicle Code, to read:

35401. (a) Except as provided in subdivisions (b), (c), and (d), a combination of vehicles coupled together, including attachments, may not exceed a total length of 65 feet.

(b) (1) A combination of vehicles coupled together, including attachments, that consists of a truck tractor, a semitrailer, and a semitrailer or trailer, may not exceed a total length of 75 feet, if the length of neither the semitrailers nor the trailer in the combination of vehicles exceeds 28 feet 6 inches.

(2) A B-train assembly is excluded from the measurement of semitrailer length when used between the first and second semitrailers of a truck tractor-semitrailer-semitrailer

1 combination of vehicles. However, if there is no second
2 semitrailer mounted to the B-train assembly, it shall be included
3 in the length measurement of the semitrailer to which it is
4 attached.

5 (c) (1) A tow truck in combination with a single disabled
6 vehicle or a single abandoned vehicle that is authorized to travel
7 on the highways by this chapter is exempt from subdivision (a)
8 when operating under a valid annual transportation permit.

9 (2) A tow truck, in combination with a disabled or abandoned
10 combination of vehicles that are authorized to travel on the
11 highways by this chapter, is exempt from subdivision (a) when
12 operating under a valid annual transportation permit and within
13 a 100-mile radius of the location specified in the permit.

14 (3) A tow truck may exceed the 100-mile radius restriction
15 imposed under paragraph (2) if a single trip permit is obtained
16 from the Department of Transportation.

17 (d) A city or county may, by ordinance, prohibit a combination
18 of vehicles of a total length in excess of 60 feet upon highways
19 under its respective jurisdiction. The ordinance may not be
20 effective until appropriate signs are erected indicating either the
21 streets affected by the ordinance or the streets not affected, as the
22 local authority determines will best serve to give notice of the
23 ordinance.

24 (e) A city or county, upon a determination that a highway or
25 portion of highway under its jurisdiction cannot, in consideration
26 of public safety, sustain the operation of trailers or semitrailers
27 of the maximum kingpin to rearmost axle distances permitted
28 under Section 35400, may, by ordinance, establish lesser
29 distances consistent with the maximum distances that the
30 highway or highway portion can sustain, except that a city or
31 county may not restrict the kingpin to rearmost axle
32 measurement to less than 38 feet on those highways or highway
33 portions. A city or county considering the adoption of an
34 ordinance shall consider, but not be limited to, consideration of,
35 all of the following:

36 (1) A comparison of the operating characteristics of the
37 vehicles to be limited as compared to operating characteristics of
38 other vehicles regulated by this code.

39 (2) Actual traffic volume.

40 (3) Frequency of accidents.

1 (4) Any other relevant data.

2 In addition, the city or county may appoint an advisory
3 committee consisting of local representatives of those interests
4 that are likely to be affected and shall consider the
5 recommendations of the advisory committee in adopting the
6 ordinance. The ordinance may not be effective until appropriate
7 signs are erected indicating the highways or highway portions
8 affected by the ordinance.

9 This subdivision shall only become operative upon the
10 adoption of an enabling ordinance by a city or county.

11 (f) Whenever, in the judgment of the Department of
12 Transportation, a state highway cannot, in consideration of
13 public safety, sustain the operation of trailers or semitrailers of
14 the maximum kingpin to rearmost axle distances permitted under
15 Section 35400, the director, in consultation with the Department
16 of the California Highway Patrol, shall compile data on total
17 traffic volume, frequency of use by vehicles covered by this
18 subdivision, accidents involving these vehicles, and other
19 relevant data to assess whether these vehicles are a threat to
20 public safety and should be excluded from the highway or
21 highway segment. The study, containing the conclusions and
22 recommendations of the director, shall be submitted to the
23 Secretary of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.
24 Unless otherwise notified by the secretary, the director shall hold
25 public hearings in accordance with the procedures set forth in
26 Article 3 (commencing with Section 35650) of Chapter 5 for the
27 purpose of determining the maximum kingpin to rear axle length,
28 which shall be not less than 38 feet, that the highway or highway
29 segment can sustain without unreasonable threat to the safety of
30 the public. Upon the basis of the findings, the Director of
31 Transportation shall declare in writing the maximum kingpin to
32 rear axle lengths which can be maintained with safety upon the
33 highway. Following the declaration of maximum lengths as
34 provided by this subdivision, the Department of Transportation
35 shall erect suitable signs at each end of the affected portion of
36 the highway and at any other points that the Department of
37 Transportation determines to be necessary to give adequate
38 notice of the length limits.

39 The Department of Transportation, in consultation with the
40 Department of the California Highway Patrol, shall compile

1 *traffic volume, geometric, and other relevant data, to assess the*
2 *maximum kingpin to rearmost axle distance of vehicle*
3 *combinations appropriate for those state highways or portion of*
4 *highways, affected by this section, that cannot safely*
5 *accommodate trailers or semitrailers of the maximum kingpin to*
6 *rearmost axle distances permitted under Section 35400. The*
7 *department shall erect suitable signs appropriately restricting*
8 *truck travel on those highways, or portions of highways.*
9 *(g) This section shall become operative on January 1, 2009.*